
**State Government Operations &
Accountability Committee**

SB 5564

Brief Description: Requiring the Secretary of State to prepare a manual of election laws and rules.

Sponsors: Senators Schmidt, Kastama, Weinstein, Roach, Shin, Rockefeller, Oke and Kohl-Welles.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Secretary of State to prepare and distribute a manual of election laws and rules.

Hearing Date: 3/11/05

Staff: Hannah Lidman (786-7291).

Background:

Each county has a vote-counting center designated by the county auditor for the counting and canvassing of mail ballots, absentee ballots and polling place ballots that are transferred to a central site to be counted, rather than being counted by a poll-site ballot counting device, on the day of a primary or election.

The center must be observed by representatives from each major political party, if they have been appointed by their parties. The proceedings at the center must be open to the public, but only those employed or authorized by the county may touch ballots, ballot containers, or operate any vote tallying equipment.

Canvassing is done by the county canvassing board in each county. This board is chaired by the county auditor and includes the county prosecutor, and the chair of the county legislative authority, or their designees. The board must adopt administrative rules to facilitate and govern the canvassing process in its jurisdiction. These rules must be adopted in a public meeting and be available to the public for review and copying.

Recounts are performed by the county canvassing board. Members of the canvassing board or their authorized representatives are the only persons who may handle the ballots.

Summary of Bill:

The Secretary of State must prepare a manual explaining all election laws and rules for use during vote counting, recounting, tabulation, and canvassing. The manual must be in easy-to-understand, plain language and available in all vote-counting centers in the state.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.